

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LISBON

S E C R E T STATE 042852

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PO, ID

SUBJECT: PORTUGUESE INTENTIONS TOWARD TIMOR INDEPENDENCE

SUMMARY: ACCORDING TO AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY HERE, AUSTRALIANS

HAVE APPROACHED GOP IN LISBON RE PORTUGUESE TIMOR. PORTUGUESE TOLD THEM THAT TIMORESE POLITICAL PARTIES WERE NOT SEEKING EARLY INDEPENDENCE BUT ONLY AFTER EIGHT-YEAR TRANSITIONAL PERIOD AND THEN ONLY IN COOPERATION WITH INDONESIANS. PORTUGUESE INDICATED THEY WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO AUSTRALIANS PASSING WORD TO GOI AND EXPRESSED INTENTION OF ARRANGING EARLY MEETING WITH INDONESIANS IN EUROPE. END SUMMARY.

1. AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY FIRST SECRETARY (MCLENNAN, PROTECT SOURCE) INFORMED DEPARTMENT FEBRUARY 25 THAT AUSTRALIAN AMBASSADOR COOPER IN LISBON RECENTLY CALLED ON MINISTER OF INTERTERRITORIAL COORDINATION ALMEIDA SANTOS TO INQUIRE ABOUT PROGRESS OF CURRENT DISCUSSIONS

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WITH TWO LEADING POLITICAL PARTIES IN PORTUGUESE TIMOR,

FRETILIN/UDT, AND TO EXPRESS GOA CONCERN ABOUT PRESS REPORTS THAT EARLY GRANT OF INDEPENDENCE TO TIMOR BEING CONSIDERED. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, SANTOS TOLD AMBASSADOR COOPER THAT REPORTS WERE INCORRECT, THAT FRETILIN/UDT HAD NOT SOUGHT EARLY INDEPENDENCE BUT HAD INSTEAD PROPOSED EIGHT-YEAR TRANSITIONAL PHASE LEADING TO INDEPENDENCE

DURING WHICH GOP WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTENANCE OF ORDER. AS SANTOS DESCRIBED IT, FRETILIN/UDT PROPOSAL CALLED FOR TWO THREE-YEAR STAGES IN WHICH GREATER LOCAL PARTICIPATION UNDER PORTUGUESE AUTHORITY WOULD LEAD TO FINAL TWO-YEAR STAGE UNDER HIGH COMMISSIONER AND CULMINATE IN POPULAR ELECTION OF CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY, GRANT OF INDEPENDENCE AND NEGOTIATION OF TREATY OF COOPERATION BETWEEN DILI AND JAKARTA. WHILE EIGHT YEAR PERIOD WAS UNREALISTICALLY LONG, SANTOS REPORTEDLY SAID, HE WAS ENCOURAGED THAT ADVOCATES OF INDEPENDENCE SHOWED WILLINGNESS TO PROCEED SLOWLY AND IN COOPERATION WITH BOTH LISBON AND JAKARTA.

2. TO AMBASSADOR COOPER'S QUESTION WHETHER PROPOSAL HAD BEEN DISCUSSED WITH INDONESIANS, SANTOS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT FONMIN SOARES WAS ATTEMPTING TO ARRANGE A MEETING WITH INDONESIAN REPS IN PARIS FOR NEXT WEEKEND. HE ADDED THAT GOP WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION IF AUSTRALIA PASSED ON WORD TO INDONESIANS OF UDT/FRETILIN PROPOSAL AND FACT NO EARLY GRANT OF INDEPENDENCE BEING ARRANGED WITHOUT INDONESIAN KNOWLEDGE. IN DISCUSSING TRANSITION PHASE, SANTOS REPORTEDLY MADE POINT THAT GOP WOULD LOOK TO AUSTRALIA AND INDONESIA FOR FINANCIAL HELP IN DEFRAYING COSTS OF CONTINUED PORTUGUESE RESPONSIBILITY FOR TERRITORY.

3. MCLENNAN COMMENTED THAT INDONESIANS HAD ALREADY MADE CLEAR TO GOA THAT THEY WOULD HAVE STRONG RESERVATIONS ABOUT ANY AUSTRALIAN AID PROGRAM TO TIMOR THAT UNDERWROTE CONTINUED PORTUGUESE CONTROL BUT SAME RESERVATIONS MIGHT NOT APPLY TO COOPERATIVE EFFORT INVOLVING ALL THREE COUNTRIES. MCLENNAN ASKED IN PARTICULAR THAT US NOT REVEAL TO PORTUGUESE THAT AUSTRALIA HAD INFORMED US OF
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DETAILS OF COOPER/SANTOS CONVERSATION. KISSINGER

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